

Highlights (continued)



A GPO-commissioned survey confirmed that the proliferation of mediums and formats has imposed new burdens and responsibilities in terms of equipment, training, and staffing needs.

This program eliminates the need for the reports to be disseminated in a printed format to depository libraries, saving production and distribution costs to the Government and the costs to the libraries to receive, process, shelf, and store the reports. As needed, reports in digital format are downloaded by depository libraries or individual users.

The jointly-earned Hammer Award is the second such honor involving **GPO Access**. In 1997, GPO and the Commerce Department jointly won a Hammer Award for **CBDNet**, the information service which makes the *Commerce Business Daily* freely accessible in real time over the Internet (<http://cbdnet.access.gpo.gov>).

GPO RELEASES FINAL REPORT ON ASSESSMENT OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PRODUCTS

In April 1999, GPO released the final report of a 9-month survey entitled *Assessment of Electronic Government Information Products*. The survey, commissioned by GPO from the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), was prepared by an NCLIS contractor, Westat, Inc.

The survey was undertaken to collect information on Federal agency plans and practices related

to the growing use of electronic formats and mediums to disseminate Government information, and the implications of these trends for GPO's Federal Depository Library Program. While the library community strongly supports the increasing availability of Government information in electronic formats, the proliferation of mediums and formats has also imposed new burdens and responsibilities in terms of equipment, training, and staffing needs.

The survey covered information products from 24 different entities in all three branches of the Federal Government, including a number of congressional committees, the Supreme Court, and most of the cabinet departments. Approximately three-quarters of all survey instruments were returned completed.

The final report made 16 key findings. The survey identified the most prevalent mediums used to disseminate Government information, as well as the most prevalent formats, noting that these medium and format standards are "common agency practice rather than agency-mandated." The survey found that "the most prevalent types of mediums are the web, paper, CD-ROM, and bulletin board systems; [and] the most prevalent formats are HTML, PDF, GIF, JPEG, TIFF, and ASCII." The

survey found that “some...agencies are exploring a range of innovative formats and web design approaches for electronic Government information products.”

At the same time, the survey found that “there is an overall lack of Government information policy guiding electronic publishing, dissemination, permanent public access, or information life cycle management,” and that “responsibility for electronic publishing within agencies is decentralized, diffuse, and unclear.” The report said that “the concept of permanent public access is not well understood,” and that “there is a lack of understanding of what ensuring authenticity [of Government information in electronic formats] entails.”

MORE THAN 550 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION LIBRARIANS MEET FOR 8th ANNUAL FEDERAL DEPOSITORY CONFERENCE

In what has become the Nation’s premier event for Government information librarians and those concerned with Government information dissemination programs, more than 550 Federal depository librarians and Federal agency representatives attended the 8th annual Federal Depository Conference, sponsored by GPO in April 1999 in Bethesda, MD. The conference was held concurrent

with the 54th meeting of the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer.

The four-day conference included demonstrations of many World Wide Web sites such as *O*Net*, *Elaws*, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site from the Labor Department, as well as the Bureau of the Census’ *American Factfinder* and the National Climatic Data Center and STAT-USA Web sites from the Commerce Department. The Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Center for Education Statistics, among others, presented updates on their public information activities and products. A representative from the Energy Department discussed plans for the DOE’s Virtual Library of Energy, Science, and Technology. The Director of the Agriculture Department’s National Agricultural Library spoke about the USDA Digital Publications Preservation Framework, and information was provided on the expanded test of the GPO and National Technical Information Service Depository Library Electronic Image Pilot Project.

GPO staff discussed specifics on building the FDLP electronic collection, based on *Managing the FDLP Electronic Collection: A Policy and Planning Document*. A representative of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)

*GPO’s goal is to act
in concert with agency
information producers
as well as the end-user
consumers of Government
information.*

